

AMERICA AT THE CLOSE OF THE 20TH CENTURY:

An Introduction

Findings from the U.S. Census Bureau reveal the complexity of American life at the end of the 20th century.

Researchers scour thousands of official documents, media reports, books, and letters looking for the key events and people of the last 100 years. But where do they turn when they want to find the facts about the everyday lives of people living in the United States? Throughout most of the 20th century, the U.S. Census Bureau has been the source for information on things that matter — family, income, poverty, education, and more.

The Census Bureau uses censuses, surveys, and administrative records to get the numbers that policymakers and government officials must have to make informed decisions. Educators need to know if existing schools will be adequate to house the next generation of students. Human resource planners demand the facts on today's working-age adults. Healthcare providers want to know how they can best balance the competing requirements of young and old. Nonprofit organizations look to Census Bureau numbers to evaluate both their clients' needs and their sponsors' resources. Moreover, the facts that the Census Bureau collects are versatile. The same statistics that are of interest to educators are also of interest to toy manufacturers. The facts on working-age adults serve both employers and union leaders. The information on the well-being of the American public is a concern for everyone living in the United States.

Population Profile of the United States: 1999 looks at the population of the United States at the close of the 20th century. Census Bureau estimates indicate that the population of the United States is diverse and dynamic. Census Bureau surveys provide the details.

Did you know?

- The 24 million people added to the United States between 1990 and 1999 is greater than the 1999 populations of Texas and Oklahoma combined. (See Chapter 2.)
- With 39 percent of adults aged 25 and older having completed college, Colorado led the states in educational attainment in 1999. (See Chapter 9.)
- Almost three-fifths of men aged 18 to 24 were either living with their parents or in a college dormitory in 1998, compared with fewer than half of women in that same age group. (See Chapter 5.)
- For many workers, computers have become as essential as desks. Half of employed adults used a computer on the job in 1997, double the share that did in 1984. (See Chapter 10.)
- When elderly householders were asked to rate the structure they lived in from one (the worst) to ten (the best), more than half gave their housing a score of nine or ten. (See Chapter 7.)
- California was home to 30 percent of the foreign-born population living in the United States in 1999. (See Chapter 17.)

- The 1999 median income was the highest ever recorded, in real terms, for White non-Hispanic (\$44,400), Black (\$27,900), and Hispanic (\$30,700) households — and the median for Asian and Pacific Islander households (\$51,200) was not statistically different from their all time-high reached in 1998. (See Chapter 12.)
- Children were more likely than adults to live in households that did not pay gas or electric bills, did not pay the rent or mortgage, did not visit the doctor or dentist, or had a service disconnected. (See Chapter 14.)
- About one in every three births during the 12-month period ending in June 1998 occurred to an unmarried mother. (See Chapter 4.)

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More.

- Read on to find out more about people living in the United States.
- Use the box at the end of each chapter to find easily accessible Internet sources, e-mail addresses, and telephone contacts for more information.
- Check Appendix A, “The Census Bureau Can Tell You More,” for the names of important Census Bureau reports and how to obtain them. Also listed in this section are important contacts in your area: Regional Census Offices, State Data Centers, and Census Depository Libraries.